



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



Seen, Heard, Supported? Young Voices, Local Services:

A Cheshire & Merseyside Review of Emotional Wellbeing
and Early Mental Health Support

On behalf of:



Knowsley Council



Liverpool City Council



WARRINGTON
Borough Council



HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Cheshire West
and Chester



Cheshire East
Council



Sefton Council

Authors

Rebecca Brown,
The Change & Integration Programme
Matthew Moreton,
YMCA St Helens

Foreward

What an incredible year of action, commissioned by the Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Children's Services, the nine Local Authorities, and the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB. This work responds to a clear and urgent need to address rising demand in children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. We must act earlier, more decisively, and together.

The Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith sector is a vital partner in this endeavour. I am proud that we committed funding to enable the sector not only to contribute to this work, but to lead it. The scale and depth of this review are impressive, with over 480 services mapped and the voices of more than 1,000 children and young people shaping its findings. The result is a report that is rich in insight, grounded in lived experience, and firmly focused on solutions.

The report is clear about gaps in current provision and the need to strengthen and grow models that are already working well. Above all, it reinforces the importance of supporting children and young people in the here and now. It will not surprise many of us that young people want different approaches, delivered in different ways and settings. What comes through overwhelmingly is their preference for non-clinical, flexible, and relational support rooted in their communities.

This is a powerful call to ensure that our collective investment is balanced across prevention, early intervention, and statutory services. Getting this balance right will reduce escalation, avoid unnecessary statutory involvement, and, quite simply, change lives.

This report would not have been possible without the commitment and trust of our voluntary sector partners. Their deep connections within communities enabled us to hear from children and young people whose voices too often go unheard within statutory systems. They helped surface services that are rarely captured within formal databases and were honest about the challenges they face: limited capacity, short-term funding cycles, and a lack of infrastructure to consistently evidence and share their impact. These realities are not peripheral to the findings; they are central to them.

What this report asks of us is simple, but not easy. It challenges us to act as one system across Cheshire & Merseyside so that every child and young person, wherever they live and whenever they need help, can access timely, early support without barriers or delay. It reinforces the value of local, accessible spaces and the importance of maximising the community assets we already have.

This is a timely and important report. Need is rising, the evidence is clear, and national policy is increasingly aligned towards prevention and early intervention. As system leaders, we are called to do more and to do better.



Crucially, this report does not just describe the challenge; it brings insight from children and young people themselves, alongside tangible, proven models that already exist and work. It invites us to work together, at every level, to meet the needs and expectations of our young citizens.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the children and young people who shared their experiences, insights, and hopes through this work. Many spoke openly about difficult moments in their lives, and their honesty and generosity have shaped this report in powerful and meaningful ways. Their voices sit at the heart of these findings and must continue to inform how we design and deliver support.

I am also grateful to all partners who contributed their time, expertise, and challenge throughout the process. A big thank you to Nasima Patel and the team for making this happen with such professionalism and passion, and special thanks to the steering group:

- Kevin Bradburne – Director of Youth Federation
- Dave Packwood - VCSFE Children and Young People Network Manager (Cheshire & Merseyside)
- Monique Collier - Chief Executive Officer for YPAS
- Val O'Donnell – Director of Services for YPAS
- Anne-Marie Thornburn – NHS Transforming Care CYP Programme Lead
- Lisa Carden Doorey – Head of Sector Development for Community & Voluntary Services Cheshire East
- Rachel Smethurst, Charlotte Hall & Louise Houghton – NHS Young Adults Mental Health group

Kind regards,

Mark Palethorpe

Chief Executive, St Helens Borough Council
Chair of Cheshire and Merseyside DCS Forum
Children's Lead for the CEX LCRCA (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)



Contact

Rebecca Brown: rebeccabrown@wirral.gov.uk

Matthew Moreton: matthew.moreton@ymcasthelens.org.uk

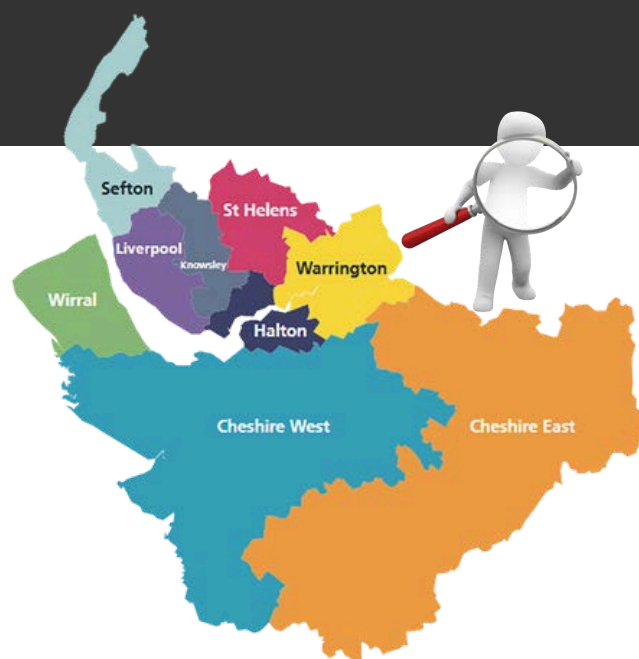


Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Table of Contents

Foreward	2
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	9
Approach	11
Voice of our Young People	13
Hearing from Young Adults (16-25)	16
Current Provision: Cheshire & Merseyside	17
Promotion of Services and Opportunity for Collaboration	17
Opening Times, Flexibility and Reach	20
Physical Spaces	20
Outreach	21
Digital	23
Recording Outcomes: What We Capture and Where	24
Parental Support and SEND	24
Multi Agency Working	26
Age Coverage, with a Focus on 16-25 Transition	27
Current Provision: Local	30
Using this Data to Shape Youth Future Hubs	32
What this means for Young People and those who support them	32
Conclusion	35
From Insight to Action: What Must Change	36
Options Appraisal	38
Providers	45
Appendix	51



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Executive Summary

This work was undertaken on behalf of the Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Children's Services, as part of their commitment to strengthening both existing and new early mental health support for children and young people across the region. It recognises the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith (VCSFE) sector as a key partner in leading this work.

Why this review matters

Children, young people and young adults across Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) are experiencing unprecedented levels of emotional distress. Around one in five is affected by a mental health condition, yet our system continues to respond late, primarily through crisis-led pathways rather than early help and prevention. Years of reduced youth provision and fragmented commissioning have reinforced a persistent belief among families, professionals and even young people themselves that “there is nothing out there”, driving avoidable demand into statutory services and CAMHS.

This review was undertaken at a critical moment. While national policy increasingly aligns around 0–25 pathways, Youth Futures Hubs and whole-system early intervention, Cheshire & Merseyside was not selected as an Early Adopter area. This places a clear responsibility on regional and place-based leaders to act collectively, using local assets and evidence to shape a more coherent, equitable and sustainable early help system.

What we did

The review draws on one of the most comprehensive pieces of C&M insight to date:

- Mapping and review of **482 emotional wellbeing and early mental health services** across C&M
- Engagement with **over 1,000 children and young people**, including those least likely to access statutory support
- System engagement with VCSFE organisations, schools, colleges, NHS partners and local authorities
- Targeted work with neurodivergent young people, disabled young people and marginalised communities
- Desk-based analysis of national policy, evidence and emerging best practice



While originally focused on physical youth hubs, the scope was intentionally broadened to include **outreach and digital provision**, reflecting the reality that many young people will not access support in traditional buildings due to stigma, anxiety, disability, transport barriers or safety concerns.

What young people told us

Young people's experiences were strikingly consistent across age, geography and level of need.

They told us that:

- **Support is hard to find**, routes in are unclear and information is often inaccurate or out of date
- **Waiting is not neutral** – long waits actively worsen mental health, increase risk and erode trust
- **Short-term interventions often end before relationships are established**, leading to repeat referrals and disengagement
- **When support works, it is relational, flexible, non-clinical and local**

Young people repeatedly expressed a desire for open-access spaces where they can socialise, take part in activities and talk to someone when needed - without referral, diagnosis or thresholds. Sensory-friendly environments, trusted adults and peer connection were particularly important for neurodivergent young people, pointing to systemic design issues rather than isolated service gaps.

The 16–25 transition: a system failure point

Young adults (16–25) described a sharp drop-off in support as they move into adulthood. Abrupt endings at 18, loss of trusted relationships, a lack of age-appropriate spaces and fragmentation between mental health, education, employment and social support were consistent themes.

Only around a third of reviewed services support young people up to age 25, often for specific cohorts only. As a result, many young adults, particularly those who are care experienced, NEET or living with long-term conditions, rely almost entirely on VCSFE provision for continuity of care. Access remains highly postcode-dependent and constrained by short-term funding, leaving one of the highest-risk age groups poorly served.

The current system: strong assets, uneven access

This review found much to build on. Seventy-five per cent of surveyed young people had accessed some form of support, and 83% of those found it helpful. Across Cheshire & Merseyside there is a **rich and diverse VCSFE-led ecosystem**, including SEND-specific support, LGBTQ+ provision, culturally specific services, targeted early help and



innovative outreach models. Strong hub models exist in places such as Wirral, Warrington and St Helens.

However, access to these assets is **highly uneven**. Several boroughs - including Sefton, Knowsley and parts of Cheshire West & Chester - face significant gaps in open-access provision. Visibility is poor, online information is often outdated or inaccurate, and promotion is frequently constrained by capacity concerns. This concentrates demand on a small number of well-known services and perpetuates crisis-led pathways. Most provision operates during weekday hours, despite young people identifying need during evenings, weekends and school hours. Detached and outreach models play a vital role in reaching those least likely to attend buildings, yet capacity and consistency vary significantly. Digital offers range from sector-leading platforms to poorly maintained directories, creating confusion for both young people and professionals.

Outcomes, integration and sustainability

Outcome measurement is fragmented, with more than 14 tools in use and VCSFE impact often invisible in statutory system data making overall performance data unclear and insights for future commissioning unavailable. While promising multi-agency and co-located models are emerging, integration remains inconsistent, particularly at transition points, leading to duplication and repeated assessment.

Short-term and insecure funding continues to undermine system resilience. Despite delivering much of the region's relational early help, the VCSFE sector remains disproportionately exposed to instability, limiting its ability to plan, promote services, retain staff and meet rising demand.

From insight to action: what must change now

The evidence in this review is clear and strongly aligned with national direction. Five immediate system priorities emerge:

1. **Expand and extend open-access youth spaces**, using existing assets now while accelerating development where gaps remain
2. **Guarantee that no young person waits without support**, through shared holding and bridging standards across all provision
3. **Fix navigation and visibility** by implementing a single, youth-friendly digital front door in every place
4. **Strengthen 16–25 pathways**, shifting from age-based cut-offs to needs-led continuity of relationships and support
5. **Stabilise the VCSFE sector** through fair, multi-year funding, infrastructure support and recognition as a core delivery partner



Seven system themes and a Gold, Silver and Bronze options appraisal are set out in the full report, enabling leaders to balance ambition, pace and local readiness.

A call to system leadership

Cheshire & Merseyside has committed partners, strong local innovation and, crucially, a clear youth voice. What it lacks is consistency, visibility and stability at scale. This requires collaborative cross -system leadership. Without coordinated action, inequalities will deepen, pressure on crisis services will continue to rise, and the narrative that “there is nothing out there” will persist.

This review offers both the evidence and the opportunity to do something different. Acting collectively now can deliver a system where early help is visible, trusted and accessible, and where young people across Cheshire & Merseyside are genuinely seen, heard and supported.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Introduction

Mental health among young people is a significant concern documented locally, regionally and nationally with around 1 in 5 young people having a mental health condition. Yet, support systems remain heavily weighted towards crisis intervention rather than prevention. Years of reduced youth provision have fuelled a persistent narrative from families and professionals that “there is nothing out there,” often resulting in a binary perception that support is either CAMHS (Community Adolescence Mental Health Service) or nothing.

National evidence reinforces this imbalance. Whilst youth services have declined by 73% since 2010, the rate of mental health related hospital admissions among 11–25-year-olds have risen by 20% since 2017 (Youth Access, 2024).

The shift from childhood to adulthood is especially challenging for young people with mental health conditions, who often struggle with lower levels of academic attainment and higher rates of unemployment than their peers. The cost of living, societal pressures and the impact of the pandemic further effect long-term life chances.

In 2023, NHS England found that 16–25-year-olds with a mental health condition were three to four times more likely to face financial hardship, from struggling to afford food and social activities to difficulties paying rent and bills (Mental Health of Children and Young People in England: 2023 Wave 4 Follow-Up).

Access to care is hampered by a widening gap between demand and capacity within services resulting in long waiting times and challenges for young people transitioning between children’s and adults’ services. Lack of clarity about available support means young people are often signposted to GPs, who can find it difficult to support without specialist services or the knowledge of what’s available locally in the community. This can compound risk and widen inequalities.

However, momentum is beginning to shift. The Government plans to open 50 Young Futures Hubs over the next four years, with £2 million allocated this year for eight Early Adopter areas and a further £70 million invested through a transformation programme running to March 2029. The NHS Long Term Plan emphasises expansion of 0–25 mental health pathways, the National Youth Strategy has recently been published, and the DfE’s 2025 Plan for Change sets out a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. It is positive that this signals renewed investment in early help and youth spaces, and it offers a key opportunity to strengthen the role of Voluntary, Community, Social Faith and



Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, whose contribution is often undervalued due to short-term funding and a statutory-led system. Strengthening parity between statutory and non-statutory provision is essential - not only for equity, but because evidence consistently shows that early, community-based support prevents escalation, reduces A&E attendance, improves long term outcomes and is more cost-effective than inpatient or crisis care (Matius et al, 2024). This support is vital for young people who may not meet the threshold to receive Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) - formally CAMHS - or prefer nonclinical settings. Local data in Sefton highlights this need, showing that 43% of CYPMHS referrals are rejected, declined or redirected.

The challenges outlined in this report are well-recognised national issues that require a coordinated local response. However, **Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) have so far been overlooked and were not selected as one of the eight Early Adopter areas for the Young Futures Hubs programme.**

In response to these challenges and opportunities, this report draws on evidence from nearly 500 providers and the voices of over 1,000 children and young people across Cheshire & Merseyside to map provision, highlight exemplars (local and national examples will be referred to throughout), identify gaps, and propose practical actions for a more visible, connected and equitable early help system including the development of a 16–25 service aligned with the 10 Year Plan and the Cheshire & Merseyside Mental Health Plan.

“ Our ambition is to ensure that “there is nothing out there” becomes a phrase of the past, replaced by a system in which support is visible, connected, and accessible when young people need it. ”

A young person friendly version of this report will be available.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Approach

This report examines emotional wellbeing and early mental health support for children and young people aged 5-25. This age range was selected both to address the well-recognised challenges associated with transitions between children's and adult services, and to complement separate mapping work already undertaken for 0–5s. Throughout this report, references to “Children and Young People” (CYP) relate specifically to this 5–25 cohort and “young adults” refers to those aged 16-25. The work was informed by a mixed-methods approach, including:

- Mapping and review of nearly 500 emotional wellbeing and early mental health services across C&M
- Direct engagement with **more than 1,000 children and young people** through surveys, workshops and in-person listening sessions (demographics are set out in Appendix A.)
- Input from VCSFE organisations, schools, colleges, health partners and local authorities, capturing both provider and system level perspectives
- Targeted engagement with groups less likely to access support, including neurodivergent young people, those with disabilities, and marginalised communities
- Desk-based analysis of local needs assessments, national policy, and emerging best practice

Much of this engagement was possible due to the involvement of VCSFE partners, who enabled access to young people not currently engaged in school, statutory services or mainstream participation routes. Their outreach capacity and trusted relationships were essential for reaching marginalised groups.

This approach prioritised co-production, inclusion and practical system insight, ensuring findings reflect lived experience as well as delivery realities. Together, these methods provide a robust evidence base that integrates young people's voices with operational understanding from across the system.

Although the work initially centred on physical youth hubs, the scope was broadened to include outreach and digital support, recognising that not all young people can or will access help in a physical building due to factors such as stigma, disability, anxiety, or territorial concerns.

This expanded scope allowed the project to more accurately capture how young people live, communicate, and seek help today.



Terminology within early mental health provision is often used inconsistently, with labels such as youth hubs, early support hubs, one-stop shops, mental health hubs, and youth centres frequently used interchangeably. For the purposes of this report:

Youth Hub	A physical, community-based, often youth-designed space, that provides open-access activities, advice, and early mental health support without referral, assessment, eligibility criteria, or a threshold for entry
Emotional wellbeing and early mental health support	Support for mild to moderate needs offered before issues escalate, aligning with the “Getting Advice” and “Getting Help” elements of the i-THrive framework (a national approach to needs-led mental health support for children and young people - About i-THRIVE i-THRIVE). However, it’s important to note that children and young people rarely experience support in a single, linear pathway; they often move between services or receive help from multiple places at once. For example, being open to CYP community MH support while also accessing support from a youth hub or a trusted adult in school. Their needs can also fluctuate, so a young person receiving “Getting Help” support may occasionally present to A&E for risk concerns without meeting the threshold to step up to CYP community MH support. This reflects the complexity of real pathways and the need for flexible, joined-up responses across the system.
Family Hub	Distinct from Youth Hubs, brings together services for whole-family needs; however, this work considers how youth hubs connect with Family Hubs, schools, and wider community services.



i-THRIVE Framework

To support the design and development of a future 16–25 service, Health Innovation North West Coast applied a model for complex change and system transformation. This involved collaborative design-thinking workshops with young people, healthcare professionals, and system partners to explore what a coherent early-help pathway into adulthood should look like.



Voice of our Young People

It is a positive that youth voice appears strong as a region, through VCSFE providers, local youth cabinets, and participation groups for example. This enabled such a clear voice of children and young people to be heard through this work. What young people told us was remarkably consistent across ages, settings and needs. Their experiences followed a clear pattern: help is hard to find, harder to access, and too easy to fall out of. When support works, it is relational, flexible and local. When it does not, the system feels invisible, slow and designed around adults rather than young people.

What young people told us at a glance



"If there hadn't been as much of a wait, it might not have happened."
(YP reflecting on the impact of delays following the death of a peer.)



Waiting is not neutral - it makes things worse

- Long waits actively worsen mental health; several young people linked delays to escalation, additional trauma and rejection, or serious harm.
- "While you wait" options are essential but uneven; many reported little or no meaningful support while waiting and expressed a preference for drop-ins as 'holding' support.
- Unclear timelines and communication gaps between agencies increase anxiety and reduce trust.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



Finding help is too hard - routes in and visibility are unclear

- Not knowing what is available locally is common; CYP want a single, youth-friendly place to find support (QR codes on buses, school emails, social channels, a single website for all services, influencers).
- Contact options should be simple and clear, from postcards or leaflets such as “Z cards” to direct messages – stating who the support is for and how to access
- Choice matters: most prefer home-based help (43%) or youth-designed spaces over clinical or intimidating office environments.
- Short interventions (e.g., six sessions) are insufficient; many end before trust is built, leading to repeat referrals and drop-out.
- Young People want opportunities to meet others with similar experiences (e.g., long COVID, disability, shared identities).

**We want help
BEFORE
breaking point
NOT AFTER!**



When and where support is needed

- Peak need occurs during school hours (33% of mentions), with after school, early evenings and weekends also identified as key access times.
- CYP want youth spaces where they can chill, meet friends, do creative or skill-based activities, and talk to someone if needed - not just a formal appointment.
- Sensory-friendly environments (quiet rooms, relaxed lighting, fidgets/blankets) help neurodivergent CYP access support earlier and more comfortably.
- Transport remains a barrier, particularly for CYP who live far from hubs, rely on parents with disabilities, or lack affordable travel options. Many expressed that central-only locations are not enough.





School works when it's flexible and discreet

- Young people want schools, colleges and universities, to recognise mental and physical health needs even without a formal diagnosis, with stronger understanding of ADHD, autism and neurodiversity.
- Flexible formats (e.g. drop-ins alongside booked sessions) reduce stigma; support should not depend on which school a CYP attends
- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) is often one-off, inconsistent and unengaging; CYP want practical, regular mental health education and easy access to wellbeing rooms without needing passes.

Across all ages, young people emphasised the importance of non-clinical, relationship-based support. When support was rated as “very helpful”, it most often came from school counsellors (24%), followed by therapists including play therapy (18%), with further strong contributions from support workers, mental health workers, youth hubs/youth workers, and parents. Many described community-based provisions as the only accessible option while waiting for CYPMHS, when not meeting thresholds, or when preferring informal early help.



Key Differences by Age Group

Under 10

Want familiar adults and home based support

10-13

Value choice; begin to show interest in youth hubs

13-16

Most dissatisfied with current support.

Need flexibility, evening access, and online options.

17-25

Prefer adult appropriate support. Strong interest in youth hubs, with a call for more creative and skills-based activity, 16+ spaces, and smoother transition into adult services.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



Current Provision: Cheshire & Merseyside

The local landscape at a glance

It is encouraging that...

They have made
me feel safe and
cared for.

“ **Around 75% of the children and young people surveyed had accessed some support, and 83% of those found it helpful...(very or somewhat).** ”

This suggests that, for those able to access support, current provision is broadly meeting its intended purpose.

However, a key finding across Cheshire and Merseyside was the inaccuracy and inconsistency of online information, which limits visibility of provision. This analysis draws on a review of 482 services, using publicly available information. In some cases, details such as opening times or access routes were unclear, meaning the findings reflect overall patterns rather than exact totals.

Across Cheshire and Merseyside, the breadth of early mental health and VCSFE provision is a clear strength, spanning universal youth work, targeted early help, digital support, SEND provision (including no-diagnosis groups), LGBTQ+ and asylum-seeking support, culturally specific community offers, and a strong range of 18+ and gender-specific services. Despite this, many CYP and professionals still perceive that there is “very little support” or that CAMHS (CYPMHS) is the only option, suggesting that **much of the existing offer is either not known about or not visible/accessible enough.**

Promotion of Services and Opportunity for Collaboration

Discussions with providers and VCSFE leads highlighted that the limited promotion of services is often intentional. Many organisations avoid actively advertising their offer because increased demand cannot be met without additional capacity, which may lead to longer waits for CYP or referral pauses. Several providers also noted that they do not have dedicated marketing resource, which naturally limits how widely their service can be promoted.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

As a result, low awareness stems from both cautious promotion and online information that is sometimes out of date, inaccurate or difficult to navigate. During this work, several websites were found to be unclear, no longer maintained or listing services that had closed. In a few cases, pages advertising CYP support redirected to inappropriate adult content. Some otherwise reputable platforms, such as Livewell, had not been updated for several years.

This lack of clear, reliable information makes it harder for CYP and families to understand what support is available, and creates inconsistency in signposting between schools, Family Hubs, GPs and other services. This, in turn, concentrates demand on the small number of well-known services, reinforcing bottlenecks and the perception that “there is very little support”.

This further reinforces the importance of the VCSFE sector, who's trusted adult relationships and community presence create pathways into support for young people who would not ordinarily approach statutory services.

Improving visibility and spreading demand more evenly across the wider system would increase access to early support and reduce pressure on statutory pathways. However, there is also a clear risk of offering too many options, which can feel overwhelming. Sefton's ReCITE project, has brought together Comics Youth and CYPMH innovation team to tackle some of these challenges by developing creative, youth-informed approaches to improve awareness, navigation and access to support. These include a co-produced Service Map for CYP in Sefton, as well as a mini zine called 'Mental Health and Me' combining peer insight with trusted information; and a Good Practice Guide to support professionals and families in completing referrals more effectively.

A more collaborative, system-wide approach to managing demand could also be beneficial. For example, local services could work together so that when one provider experiences higher referral pressure, another takes additional capacity - similar to the partnership between St Joseph's and MerseyCare in Warrington which significantly reduced waiting times. Similarly, Wirral's Branch model illustrates how triage and matching can help manage demand by directing CYP and families to the most appropriate support quickly. Enablers for the successful implementation of the model can be found below.



Wirral Branch (enablers)

A needs analysis highlighted data gaps and duplication, with children and young people appearing on multiple waiting lists and 43% of CAMHS referrals not meeting threshold, demonstrating the need for stronger coordination and a shared data infrastructure to shape future service design. The long-standing Future in Mind steering group in Wirral provided a valuable forum for shaping the tender, drawing on statutory and voluntary sector insight and enabling early market engagement that allowed providers to prepare collaboratively. The area's mature VCSFE partnerships further supported coordinated working and reduced duplication by enabling organisations to focus on their respective strengths. The programme was jointly commissioned through committed leadership from the ICB, Public Health and Children's Services, underpinned by clear governance and accountability arrangements. Delivery operates through a contracted alliance model, which, though not a legal entity, provides a structured partnership based on shared values, agreed processes, regular meetings and robust information sharing agreements.

Not all services offer holding support while young people wait, and some CYP told us long waits can worsen trauma, increasing the need for regular drop-ins.

To manage staffing, venue and resource constraints, providers could collaborate on weekly shared bridging offers, rotating responsibility for drop-ins and combining online and face-to-face sessions.

Regular networking events and shared promotion enable better collaboration and awareness. Local provider forums – hosted on a rotating basis – could strengthen relationships and support confident signposting. Any local promotion plan should consider digital poverty and forthcoming changes to legislation on CYP phone/social media use, ensuring a blended digital and paper-based approach.

STRENGTHS IN ACTION

Sefton collaboration with Comics Youth to develop a CYP service Zine

Young Adults video (Liverpool)



Storyhouse networking and Liverpool NOW events



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Opening Times, Flexibility and Reach

Provision across the region is predominantly available weekday daytimes. While some out-of-school-hours options exist, these remain limited compared to CYP preferences, especially among 13–16s and 17–25s.

Many activities operate from rented rooms, community centres or Family Hub spaces, which CYP value for being local and relational. However, availability is often limited to specific days/times, making regular attendance difficult. Some shared community venues may feel less youth-focused for older teenagers and young adults.

Smaller community-based provision work best when it complements – not replaces - dedicated, purpose-built, CYP-designed spaces. Some CYP noted that living in an affluent area can mean less support as funding prioritises areas of deprivation – even though affluent areas may still have high numbers of SEND young people needing support. While the planned expansion of Mental Health in Schools Teams (MHSTs) to full coverage by 2029 is welcome, not all young people want, or feel able, to access support in school. Alternative options will still be essential.

It's positive that there are Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) MH Crisis lines that are open 24/7 via NHS 111.

Physical Spaces

Across Cheshire and Merseyside, provision remains uneven. Some areas benefit from large, purpose-built youth hubs - Wirral (The Hive), Warrington (Youth Zone) and St Helens (Youth Hub). Cheshire East, Halton and CWAC (Cheshire West & Chester) are progressing new Hubs, though these are not yet fully realised with some pending funding. In Knowsley, Our Place provides an important base but is not yet a fully open-access hub which would strengthen support; particularly given the recent national mapping via Social Investment Business (SIB) and University of Leeds, also identified Knowsley as having unmet need in relation to youth provision

(<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/irtania.ismira.dewi/viz/MappingYouthProvisionDashboard/DashboardNeed>). Sefton and CWAC continue to show the greatest gaps, with Sefton the priority for a central open-access youth hub; particularly given one of their main early mental health support providers has recently had to close referrals.

Alongside these, a range of smaller community-based groups deliver weekly sessions, though limited frequency and capacity can restrict access.



There is a need to extend and coordinate out-of-hours open-access support, supported by a shared local timetable so CYP know what's open tonight in their area. This would also support areas with extensive outreach, where multiple offers can cause confusion and missed sessions.

Even in areas with established hubs, demand outstrips capacity. Liverpool would benefit from additional hubs or expanded open-access support through services like YPAS (Young Persons Advisory Service). **Further investment in existing hubs and accelerating those in development would support a more equitable C&M offer.**

Where new buildings aren't feasible, practical discussions about expanding established provisions - such as crisis cafés and other community assets - could broaden access while finding creative ways to address issues like safeguarding.

Transport costs and rural connectivity remain barriers, reinforcing the need for local, accessible spaces and maximising existing community assets. There are positive examples of smaller, local services in Cheshire East, where organisations such as Visyon and Just Drop In work collaboratively to provide accessible support across the area.

STRENGTHS IN ACTION

The Hive (Wirral)
Warrington Youth Zone
YMCA Youth Hub (St Helens)

Dome Youth Zone (Cheshire East)
Opening late 2026

Kitty's Laundrette (Liverpool)
Offers an imaginative community model,
combining practical laundry services with an
open, welcoming social space to connect.

Outreach

Due to challenges securing suitable buildings, mobile and detached youth provision plays a vital role in extending access. These models bring support directly to communities, and reduce barriers linked to transport, rurality, and anxiety, especially for CYP not in school or at risk of disengaging.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Outreach is effective for providing trusted, relationship-based support. Multi-agency outreach refers to support delivered by two or more services working together in the community, rather than expecting children, young people, or families to come to them. It usually involves professionals from different organisations (e.g., health, education, youth services, social care, VCSFE) going out into local settings such as schools, youth hubs, community centres, or homes to offer joined-up, early, and accessible support.

Strong examples of multi-agency outreach in our region include:

- Contextual Safeguarding partnerships (Cheshire East, CWAC and St Helens)
- Targeted NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) outreach (Halton and Cheshire East)
- Partnerships with schools and museums (Liverpool and Knowsley)

Outreach exists in most areas but is less clear in Warrington and Sefton and effectiveness varies due to staffing, resources and uptake.

“ When aligned with multi-agency partners, outreach/detached helps identify emerging risks, respond to local need and ensure coverage. Detached provision remains a high impact, low barrier model, particularly in areas without physical hubs or in overlooked rural/affluent communities. ”

STRENGTHS IN ACTION

Mobile Youth Provisions
Vibe & Sports Alive offer detached and sport activities based around their vehicles

Wirral's Neighbourhood Youth
Youth workers, working across various venues (e.g. fire stations)

Croydon Talk Bus
A mobile information and support hub offering a safe, accessible space for advice and early emotional-wellbeing support.



Digital

Many services provide always-on digital support (e.g. Kooth, Qwell), aligning well with CYP preferences. However, the quality, accessibility and reliability of digital offers vary significantly across the region. By a digital offer, we mean enabling young people or family members to go online to find local services, access emotional-wellbeing resources, or connect with someone for support.

Some areas provide clear, youth-friendly platforms, while others rely on outdated directories. The impact of this inconsistency is significant. Young people seeking help for the first time can encounter confusing or inaccurate information, which can deter engagement, while professionals report difficulty navigating digital pathways and identifying up-to-date provision.

Wirral stands out for co-produced platforms like Branch and Zillo - visual, accessible and organised around CYP needs (anxiety, sleep, exam stress) rather than service thresholds.

Many areas base their offer on the I Thrive framework, but how this is shown online can either help or hinder access. When websites rely heavily on Thrive terminology or expect users to know their “quadrant,” support becomes harder to find.

Simpler sites that don't focus on Thrive labels tend to be much more accessible for young people and families.

There is a need to:

- Adopt youth friendly triage/navigation platforms (Branch/AsOne/BeeBot style)
- Fund short term digital clean ups (3-6 months) to ensure information online is correct and updated.
- Invest in local infrastructure so that areas can regularly map what support is available and ensure it aligns with local needs.
- Support smaller community organisations to maintain a visible online presence

Interest already exists in CWAC, Cheshire East and Warrington to implement a similar triage system. Regional funding could be applied for to support a consistent C&M approach, such as the digital transformation fund. Innovative ways of developing digital youth work can be found here - [1768-NYA-Digital-Youth-Work-Standards—DIGITAL.pdf](#)



Recording Outcomes: What We Capture and Where

Reporting routes are currently fragmented across NHS, commissioner and local authority systems and are not routinely reviewed collaboratively. As a result, the level of support provided by VCSFE services, and the number of contacts they have with children and young people, is often under-reported or recorded inaccurately. This means the true scale of their work isn't always visible, and national figures can end up presenting an incomplete picture of what's actually happening on the ground.

Approaches to measuring outcomes vary widely. Different providers use different tools, specific contractual obligations and reporting routes, and evaluation has historically focused on commissioned services, meaning VCSFE impact is not consistently recognised.

Analysis identified 14 named outcome tools, alongside surveys and qualitative feedback. Tools included CORE, WEMWBS/S-WEMWBS, Goal Based Outcomes, RCADS, SDQ and PHQ-9.

There is a clear opportunity to adopt a shared outcomes approach, either by mapping existing tools to common domains or agreeing a minimum core outcome set focused on wellbeing, goal progress and experience of service.

This work is already underway supported by the C&M Mental Health Programme to develop more consistent data capture and flow.

Parental Support and SEND

CYP want more support delivered at home, alongside stronger support for parents and carers. While some outreach models include home visits, overall availability is unclear. Expanding home-based support would better reflect CYP preferences.

Equipping parents and carers to recognise early mental health needs can reduce escalation and unnecessary referrals. There is an opportunity to promote existing support, including national helplines, MyHappyMind ([myHappyMind - Empowering Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing](#)), Youth Connect 5 ([Youth Connect 5](#)) and guides on topics like self-harm (e.g., [Visiting Your General Practitioner](#)).

SEND-related support appears positive across the region, with groups for CYP and parents, including Parent Carer Forums (PCF's) and services such as ADDvanced



Solutions. In some areas groups do not require a diagnosis, which is particularly important with there often being long waits for assessment and the strong link between neurodiversity and mental health (in Wirral, 47.9% of young people who accessed support via Branch, had a SEND need). Cheshire East appeared particularly strong in this area. However, feedback from young people in both the survey and consultations showed that those who are autistic, have ADHD, are dyslexic, or otherwise neurodivergent do not feel there is enough support. They report that support that does exist is often hard to access, poorly understood, too short-term, not tailored to neurodivergent needs, and only available at crisis point. **This suggests a clear gap between the services that are commissioned and young peoples lived experience: services may exist, but they are often hard to find or unsuitable and for many neurodivergent young people, including those with learning disabilities, there simply isn't enough support available in the first place.**

There also remains a clear need to strengthen SEND and neurodiversity awareness across existing services, including:

- 360° building tours
- staff training
- pastoral support for CYP
- sensory-aware environments
- flexible offers (peer groups, quiet/adapted sessions, 121 support)
- tools such as Knowing Me profiling ([What is the Knowing ME profiling tool - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#))

STRENGTHS IN ACTION

Storyhouse (CWAC)

Pastoral staff member to onboard YP,
and provide tailored support
based on individuals needs

SEND support (no diagnosis needed):

Great Minds Together,
Autism Inclusive (Cheshire East)
ADDvanced Solutions network

"I have SPD (sensory processing disorder), a form of autism... teachers think I'm being 'naughty' instead of recognising I'm neurodivergent"

Mainstream youth spaces often aren't designed with sensory needs in mind.

"Groups for SEN children and young adults who struggle with social situations with an onsite therapist/councillor/rage room would be brilliant."



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Multi Agency Working

There is a growing emphasis on multi-agency, co-located models; as highlighted in the recently published 'Neighbourhood Health Framework' ([Neighbourhood health framework - GOV.UK](#)). The soon to be opened Joy Building in Wirral led by Open Door Charity is a great example of this in practice. This will mean My Mind (CYPMHS) will be co-located with VCSFE partners in a welcoming, co-designed venue, including music events and café, as well as the Storyhouse/Open Door collaboration plans in CWAC. These models bring charities and services together in safe, nonclinical spaces preferred by CYP. **They can aid in reducing stigma associated with certain services, whilst preventing young people having to retell their story and helping to overcome transportation barriers.** Merseycare's proposed research into multi-agency early intervention hubs will be important to learn from, and any resulting insights should be integrated into future work.

Where co-location is not possible, regular service attendance within youth settings (e.g. sexual health and careers drop-ins) strengthen collaboration and access.

Social prescribing plays a key linking role between families, VCSFE and health. GPs often lack confidence in signposting when targeted intervention is not required, highlighting the importance of up-to-date signposting pathways.

Strong examples include:

- Sefton CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) education and mental health network meetings and FIM (Future in Mind)
- Cheshire East Mental Health Lead Network meetings (acknowledged by DFE as good practice)
- Liverpool Learning Partnership
- MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) integration

As MHSTs grow towards achieving the governments ambition for full national coverage by December 2029, there is still uncertainty among staff about how their work connects with the wider system. Clear consistent information-sharing is essential to ensure CYP receive timely help regardless of entry points. Learning from pilots such as the St Helens social prescribing to support school attendance, will be key.





Age Coverage, with a Focus on 16-25 Transition

Around 32% of reviewed services support CYP up to age 25, though 9% do so only for specific cohorts (SEND, EHCPs, care-leavers). YPAS stands out for offering support up to 25 without eligibility conditions. However, most early help offers still taper at 18, creating uneven transition for many young adults. **Transition from secondary school into further education remains a particular pressure point with colleges often describing provision as feeling “0–16 rather than 0–19”.** As mental health support in education settings continues to scale, including colleges, it remains important not to overlook young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Young adults repeatedly described feeling caught between children’s and adults’ systems, with abrupt endings, reduced relational continuity, and fewer youth appropriate spaces. VCSFE organisations frequently provide the only consistent, age-appropriate support during this period.

It is encouraging that innovative models are emerging to support young adults. Some developments focusing on specific 16+ provision, while others embed employability, education and wellbeing support within existing youth spaces.



These include:

- Knowsley Youth Hub: combining wellbeing and employability through its fitness for work sessions
- CWAC Youth Fed's Pledge and Youth Enterprise programme: school–college–employer links
- NEET focused outreach and employment pathways
- Volunteer to employment models (e.g., The Hive)
- Clinical specialist proposal in Warrington colleges
- Wigan Youth Zone **Pathway to Employment** - supporting 258 young people aged 18–24 in 2024/25, with 88 moving into jobs or apprenticeships
- Cheshire East online volunteering platform

Despite these strengths, access remains uneven and risks becoming a postcode lottery. A more consistent 16-25 early intervention pathway is needed, potentially through consortium models, shared bids or NEET focused pilots.



The young adult redesign work led by Health Innovation North West Coast has produced a system wide co-designed future state ambition for these services including five key changes:

1. **Employing our young people**

Employing young people will ensure services are better tailored to their needs. This will improve young people's experience of services as they will likely be more relevant. It will also provide opportunities for service users to gain work experience, supporting their recovery journey and aligning with government ambitions to reduce unemployment in the population.

2. **Upskilling our workforce**

Empowering young people to develop and deliver training that is relevant to their personal circumstances will help staff to better understand them and the challenges they face. This will enhance the delivery of services, reduce health inequalities and improve service users' experience of receiving care.

3. **Marketing our services**

Better marketing of our services will improve access and ensure people access the right service for them. It will also help with the transition from child to adult services.

4. **Transition policy**

Developing a Cheshire & Merseyside Transition Policy, that moves from age-based to needs-based thresholds, will bridge the gaps between children's and adult services and improve young people's experience and continuity of care.

5. **Physical spaces and holistic care options**

In line with the aforementioned youth hubs, taking a neighbourhood approach to providing holistic, person-centred, multi-agency care, under one roof and in an environment that is welcoming and relevant to young people.

Designed by young people, these spaces could include a variety of assets / activities such as life skills, arts, cooking etc. alongside co-located health and social care services.

These spaces could be supported by a digital, online or virtual environment, providing a Single Point of Access for all referrals and housing the educational content, apps and a local services library etc.



Current Provision: Local

There is meaningful variation between localities. For example, the proportion of services supporting young people up to age 25 ranges from approximately one-fifth in some areas to around one-half in others, and evening and weekend availability also varies, with some places offering greater out-of-hours access.

“ **This highlights the need for collaborative, strategic commissioning across Cheshire & Merseyside to work towards more consistent standards, ensuring that young people experience an equitable core offer regardless of where they live, whilst maintaining local flexibility to meet the needs of specific neighbourhoods.** ”

While more detailed place-based reports will follow this C&M report, a list of summary priority improvements is set out below, followed by a brief overview of local strengths and areas for development.

Summary of priority improvement areas by place:

- **Sefton** – Open Access Youth Hub, re-introduce education/VCSFE mental health network meetings, clearer online support and digital clean up
- **Knowsley** – Open Access Youth Hub or expand offer via OurPlace, explore referrals via KOGS
- **St Helens** – Digital platform and 16-25 offer and extend opening hours
- **Wirral** – Promotion of services outside of the digital platform, including support for sleep, social media, and diet. Evening/weekend scale up
- **CWAC** – Open Access Youth Hub (accelerate Storyhouse/Open door collaboration), and clearer online support/digital front door
- **Cheshire East** – Digital front door and detached in more underserved areas eg Bollington.
- **Warrington** – Strengthen support in school, 16-25 service (including strengthening volunteering -employment pathways) and digital front door
- **Halton** – Open Access Youth Hub to be fast tracked and extended hours of detached provision, targeted weekend pilots
- **Liverpool** – Add Hub capacity/extend open access via YPAS and existing services



Sefton

Sefton offers emotional-wellbeing support through Parenting 2000, Venus, SWAN and the Inclusive Hub, but currently does not have any open-access youth spaces and faces capacity and funding pressures. Youth voice appears strong. Digital information exists but is often out of date and hard for CYP to navigate.

Liverpool

Liverpool benefits from strong YPAS sites, VCSE youth hubs and wide school-based wellbeing support, but only has one youth-zone-style open-access space (Fire Fit) and faces capacity issues. Detached work is active across neighbourhoods but restricted by staffing and inconsistent reach. More youth-club-style venues with drop-in spaces and extended hours would be beneficial. Some strong digital platforms such as CAMHS but content can be outdated on some.

Wirral

Wirral has strong youth spaces like The Hive and Bloom Building, with major new developments coming in 2026. Detached provision runs through the Neighbourhood Youth Model but relies on high levels of promotion. It has a sector leading digital offer through Branch, Zillo, and Family Toolbox though multiple platforms could be confusing.

Knowsley

Knowsley offers strong targeted support through MYA and Centre 63 but does not have any open-access youth spaces, and travel across the borough is a barrier to participation. Detached work is growing through Right to Succeed and MYA and links to schools is a strength. KOGS pathway is useful but not a full youth-friendly digital front door.

St Helens

St Helens has strong support through the YMCA Youth Hub, Family Hubs, school based services, detached teams and a developing Youth Work Strategy, with a new council Youth Hub planned for 2027. However, there can be transport barriers and limited youth friendly marketing. A more CYP friendly 'one door' digital platform would be beneficial.

Halton

Halton offers small-scale youth provision with major developments planned through Youthy.com and the Well Runcorn hub but currently has limited dedicated youth spaces. Detached work is strong with a mobile provision, but some areas can be underserved. They are in the process of embedding a Digital Front Door through Beebot and are piloting 16+ employability models.

Warrington

Warrington benefits from strong spaces like WYZ and The Hub, but has less alternatives for those unable/unwilling to access these services, and has gaps for 16+ and minority groups. Detached work focus on targeted initiatives and they have a wealth of males support groups. Digital resources exist but are not as CYP-friendly. They would like more support in schools.

Cheshire East

Cheshire East's youth offer is expanding, with The Dome opening soon complimenting strong provision from Visyon, Just Drop In, Family Hubs, crisis cafés and targeted groups. Detached supports those at risk of exclusion across Macclesfield, Crewe and Congleton but has low staffing resources available. Gaps in rural areas and limited open-access space but a strong MH alliance. Digital platforms like iThrive and MyMind.org provide useful information, though navigation is difficult and relies on PDFs.

Cheshire West & Chester (CWAC)

CWAC has some physical provision centred on Storyhouse, and wide reaching support from YouthFed with crisis cafés, targeted groups and a strong school wellbeing offer, but has no dedicated youth spaces and faces rural access challenges. Detached outreach runs across major towns but has low capacity. Digital information exists through Live Well and MyMind.org, though it is often out of date and not easy for CYP to navigate.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Using this Data to Shape Youth Future Hubs

The findings in this report provide clear evidence to guide the development of any future Youth Futures Hubs across Cheshire & Merseyside. Young people expressed strong demand for open-access youth spaces, flexible early intervention, clear navigation routes, and relational, non-clinical support - all core components of the proposed Hub model. The data also highlight the need for 16 to 25 pathways, co-produced design, integration with VCSFE partners, and evening/weekend access. These insights should be used to inform site selection, workforce configuration, partnership models and commissioning intentions for future Hub phases.

What this means for Young People and those who support them

CYP Priority	Current Position	Match?	Gaps / Actions
Flexible times	Some open-access provision exists. Out-of-hours delivery is limited and often offered on irregular or rotating days and times.	⚠ Amber	Extend hours, particularly in rural areas Expand provision in all areas, prioritising Sefton, Halton, Knowsley and Cheshire West
Holding support if there is a wait	Waits vary widely; some VCSFE services capping referrals or pausing. Some offer drop-in holding support	⚠ Amber	Embed holding support standards - no child waits without communication, being signposted or interim support offer
Clear routes in	CYP consistently report not knowing where to go. Providers face barriers to advertising	✖ Red	Embed a single youth-friendly front door in all 9 areas. Coordinated promotion and information sharing via alliances (both for families and professionals) Blended digital and paper marketing (QR codes, buses, social media).
Digital options	Variable quality – some excellent, others outdated and difficult to navigate	⚠ Amber	Update local directories. Create youth friendly pages. Expand triage systems to all 9 areas



CYP Priority	Current Position	Match?	
Being listened to	Youth sector strong relationally.	⚠️ Amber	Protect relational support, including consistent long-term funding Embed step-up/step-down links and strengthen partnership working
ND and SEND-informed	Patchy and provider-dependent. Strong pockets exist but inconsistent.	⚠️ Amber	Fund ND/LD training and expand specialist support. Providers undertake the Youth Access national self-assessment framework Promote <u>Neurodiversity support pathway - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside</u> Encourage non threshold support groups including for those with physical disabilities, and learning disabilities Roll out of 'Knowing Me' profiling tool
Better transitions (16–25)	Inconsistent but pockets of innovation and pilot activity	❌ Red	Create 16–25 pathways within provisions, including volunteering and employment opportunities. Commission 16–25 open-access with evening hours & digital support. Pilot 16-25 future service model Support development of a C&M Transitions Policy for YP
Outreach	Good practice in some areas but uneven. Staffing resources limits reach.	⚠️ Amber	Expand detached. Ensure consistent presence and providers are linked up. Consider collaboration on timetable



CYP Priority	Current Position	Match?	
Youth hubs, spaces & activities	Strong examples but gaps across several boroughs.	⚠ Amber	Develop multi-agency hubs. Extend hours; creative/skills activities. Prioritise areas with least open access provision eg Sefton, for new development funding Provide sustainability funding for all other areas. Buddy up system to learn from others when developing new projects
Longer sessions	Many services limited to 6 sessions.	⚠ Amber	Promote extended interventions/bespoke sessions eg YMCA St Helens who offer up to 12. Longer time for quality assessment where there is risk or multiple needs
More flexible, school-based support	MHSTs well-established; strong links in some areas (ELSA, MyHappyMind)	⚠ Amber	Extend to all schools - primary & further education - in line with government ambitions Increase drop-in support Less rigidity with pastoral support. Ensure all schools undertake regular self-assessment on MH support using tools such as www.liverpoolwsa.com
Better transport	Many main hubs are in central locations, not all CYP are able to access, not all have good transport links and cost associated	✗ Red	Work with combined authority transport leads to explore free or subsidised transport for CYP.



Conclusion

Across Cheshire and Merseyside, there is much to be proud of. Every area has developed genuine strengths in supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing - from vibrant youth spaces and innovative detached work to expanding online triage and digital early help – demonstrating what is possible when local systems invest early.

But this strength is not yet shared equally. Not every place has the same mix of physical, detached and digital support. Not every young person has somewhere they can simply walk into close to home - geography still shapes access in ways that feel unfair.

These findings also underline the need for sustainable, fair funding for VCSFE early -intervention services. Despite providing much of the region's relational, accessible support, VCSFE provision is often dependent on short -term grants/contracts. Impact being staffing instability compromising service consistency and visibility, driving up eligibility thresholds and reducing access. This creates a repeating cycle where diminished capacity leads to diminished awareness, further weakening the offer to children and families. Strengthening parity between statutory and VCSFE services is essential for a stable early help- system.

Young people have also been clear about what matters most. When they want to meet peers, talk to someone, or get help early, they need to know exactly where to go, and they need to know someone will be there. They want support that doesn't depend on thresholds, diagnoses or labels; support that is open to every young person and available in the places they already feel safe: their neighbourhoods, schools, colleges and digital spaces.

These priorities align closely with national direction. The National Youth Strategy calls for reducing participation gaps, strengthening local authority leadership, deepening partnerships with the VCSFE sector and expanding co-production. National investment programmes, from life-skills funding in schools to commitments around youth workers, digital infrastructure and employment pathways, all point towards place-based, partnership-led early intervention.

But national ambition alone will not secure local change. To break cycles of short-term funding and fragile early help systems, C&M needs long-term stability and a shared purpose. The VCSFE sector - the backbone of early mental health support - cannot absorb rising demand without dependable investment.



Young people are telling us clearly: they need to hear about services, they need accessible spaces, they need trusted adults, and they need support long before crisis takes root.

So, this report ends with a simple invitation:

Let us act as one across Cheshire & Merseyside, to ensure every young person, wherever they live and whenever they need support, can access early help without barriers or delay.

From Insight to Action: What Must Change

✔ **Expand existing youth spaces now, while accelerating hub development where gaps remain**

Ensure 7-day open-access coverage across all boroughs by extending hours in existing hubs/spaces, activating community assets, and fast-tracking new hub sites in Sefton, CWAC and Halton where provision is insufficient.

Why: Young people prioritise local, relational, non-clinical spaces; demand exceeds current capacity; and Cheshire & Merseyside was not selected as an Early Adopter, making local acceleration essential.

✔ **Guarantee no waiting without support or signposting through shared bridging standards**

Adopt a region-wide “Holding Support Standard” ensuring every CYP receives proactive contact, clear timelines, drop-in access and interim offers while waiting - across all commissioned and VCSFE services.

Why: Young people describe waiting as harmful; waits fuel escalation, A&E use and disengagement.

✔ **Fix digital navigation through a single, youth-friendly front door**

Every area implements a consistent, accessible digital ‘front door’ with updated service info, clear routes in, topic-led navigation and links to trusted digital platforms (Kooth/Qwell/Togetherall).

Why: CYP repeatedly said “I don’t know where to go”; digital inconsistency is a major barrier; Branch and Zillo show what good looks like.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

✔ **Strengthen schools, colleges and 16–25 pathways**

Ensure every school and college has a clear early-help offer, flexible drop-ins, ND-aware support, strong VCSFE links and alignment with 0–25 pathways, with dedicated 16–25 spaces and transition standards.

Why: Schools are the top place where support “works”; transitions are one of the biggest pain points; MHST expansion targets full coverage by 2029/30.

✔ **Move from ad-hoc to coordinated, capacity-managed promotion**

Develop an alliance-led promotion model that spotlights a small core offer per area, avoids overwhelming CYP with choices, and ensures consistent system-wide messaging.

Why: Providers often avoid advertising due to capacity limits; CYP face confusion; demand needs to be shared, not concentrated.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

The full recommendations and options appraisal below show how to deliver these system moves.

Options Appraisal

1. Universal Access: A Youth Hub in Every Area

Overview

Target: All 9 areas operate or develop a 7-day, youth-friendly, open-access model with:

- Local and cross-borough access
- Evening/weekend cover
- Transport barriers reduced
- ND/SEND accessibility embedded from design stage
- Alignment with national Young Futures Hubs expansion.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option	Summary
Gold 	“Expand existing assets now & accelerate new builds” • Extend hours and open-access capacity in existing hubs/spaces • (Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington, Wirral, Knowsley) • Fast-track Sefton, Cheshire East, CWAC, Halton for new hub development using pooled local funds & early Youth Futures/Better Youth Spaces bids. • Shared regional timetable (“What’s open tonight?”) • Transport mitigation (subsidised travel) • Full ND/SEND-inclusive design • Multi-agency open-access model (health, VCSFE, careers, social care)
Silver 	“Equity development” • Fast-track Sefton, Cheshire East, CWAC, Halton for new hub development using pooled local funds & early Youth Futures/Better Youth Spaces bids. • Ensure continuation funding for existing hubs/spaces aiming for equitable delivery across all C&M.
Bronze 	“Hub without walls” • Scale detached/mobile/popup models with a shared 7-day timetable (“What’s open tonight?”), whilst planned hubs are developed. • Include sensory-friendly adjustments and outreach to rural/affluent overlooked areas. • Preparation phase for future hubs

If we do nothing

Inequality deepens; CYP in some boroughs remain underserved; waits and A&E attendance rise; “There’s nothing out there” narrative persists; VCSFE sustainability further erodes.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

2. Strong Emotional Wellbeing Offers in Every School & College

Overview

Target (by 2027):

- Every school publishes a clear, ND-inclusive mental health offer
- All colleges deploy an approved digital out-of-hours platform (Togetherall / Kooth / equivalent)
- All settings link consistently to VCSFE partners and local hubs
- Step-up/step-down pathways visible and simple

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option		Summary
Gold		“Strengthen provision & digital safety net” • Clinical specialist pilots in colleges • School/college drop-in models in every area • VCSFE delivery embedded in-school and colleges • ND/SEND training for all staff • Include MH module in all education staff training courses • Deploy digital platforms in all areas (Togetherall/Kooth).
Silver		“C&M Pledge & Assurance” • Create consistency across school/college MH offers and reduce postcode variation by implementing a common pledge with light-touch annual reporting • Strengthen staff CPD (ND/SEND, trauma-informed) • Strengthen VCSFE partnerships promoting projects in schools/colleges
Bronze		“Networks & Flexibility” • Develop VCSFE/Education MH focussed partnership networks in all areas • Provide mixture of ND-friendly environments, parent/family workshops and flexible drop-ins in all educational establishments.

If we do nothing

Variability widens; CYP continue to depend on school-by-school provision; colleges remain under-supported for 16–19s; waiting lists lengthen; early-help pathways collapse at transition.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

3. Navigation, Digital Access & System Visibility

Overview

Target:

- No CYP waits without contact/support
- CYP can self-navigate via topic-led, stigma-reducing routes
- CYP always know where to go and what's open today and never wait without support.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option		Summary
Gold		"Fully integrated navigation system (digital & triage & visibility)" • "No CYP waits without contact" standard • Shared rotating drop-ins across providers • Branch/As One-style triage in all nine areas • Directories updated every 90 days with "last updated" labels • Youth-friendly signposting across schools, colleges, buses, GP, community spaces • Weekly digest of what's available • Single shared timetable for drop-ins, hubs, groups
Silver		"Local triage & consistent digital front door & targeted promotion" • Local versions of holding support • Weekly digest of groups • Shared referral management • Youth friendly topic-based digital front doors • Directory clean-up in each area • Core set of offers promoted consistently
Bronze		"Single list, basic digital tidy up & essential visibility" • Region-wide holding support standards • Rotating shared drop-ins • One shared list of offers • Basic directory update and a simple C&M link hub • Central hub timetables published

If we do nothing

Young people wait in the dark; escalation increases; families lose trust; duplication/failed referrals rise; A&E use continues to spike.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

4. Support at Home & for Parents/Carers

Overview

Parents/carers are key early-help partners; many don't know where to go; ND/SEND parents need clearer, earlier support. Every child, young person and family will have the choice to access support at home, ensuring help is available in the setting that works best for them.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option	Summary
Gold 	"Universal parent offer & choice of venue" • Home-based support will be available as a standard option across all services • Region-branded guides, webinars, signposting, • Fund and add parallel parent/carer groups to youth hub timetables (evenings/weekends). • Quarterly pop-ups in every locality with SEND-inclusive content co-led by VCSFE. • ND/SEND resources, promoted via Family Hubs, GPs, schools, hubs.
Silver 	"Parent tracks in hubs" • Most services will offer home-based support where appropriate, with plans in place to extend this option consistently across all areas. • Fund and add parallel parent/carer groups to youth hub timetables (evenings/weekends). • Quarterly pop-ups spread over 9 localities with SEND-inclusive content co-led by VCSFE. • Region-branded guides, webinars, signposting, • ND/SEND resources, promoted via Family Hubs, GPs, schools, hubs.
Bronze 	"Popup events" • Quarterly pop-ups spread over 9 localities with SEND-inclusive content co-led by VCSFE. • Region-branded guides, webinars, signposting, • ND/SEND resources, promoted via Family Hubs, GPs, schools, hubs. • Services will explore and identify opportunities to provide home-based support, beginning with young people where it is most suitable or beneficial.

If we do nothing

Parents remain unsure how to help; unnecessary referrals increase; crises escalate at home; ND/SEND families feel excluded.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

5. Strengthening Support for Young Adults (16–25)

Overview

Addresses the most acute system gap - the transition cliff edge - by building a needs-not-age 16–25 offer aligned to NHS 0–25 ambitions.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option		Summary
Gold		“Expand practical 16–25 routes now” • Design a C&M early intervention pathway with VCSFE consortia including NEET-focused outreach. • Evening/weekend support • Extend hours/spaces tailored for 16–25s • Pilot a 16–25 mental health group model • Embed volunteering to employment pathways (e.g., Youth Zones/Hive) • Launch college-based clinical specialist pilots. • Assign responsibility for ensuring digital marketing of 16-25 services is updated a minimum of quarterly
Silver		“Co-produced 16–25 model” • Design a C&M early intervention pathway with VCSE consortia including NEET-focused outreach. • Launch college-based clinical specialist pilots. • Assign responsibility for ensuring digital marketing of 16-25 services is updated a minimum of quarterly
Bronze		“Directory discipline” • Launch college-based clinical specialist pilots. • Assign responsibility for ensuring digital marketing of 16-25 services is updated a minimum of quarterly

If we do nothing

Cliff edges at 18 persist; continuity and relationships break down; young adults disengage; higher A&E and crisis service use continues.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

6. Multi-Agency Integration & System Change

Overview

Multi-agency, co-located, and aligned with i-THRIVE and neighbourhood models; addresses duplication and fragmentation.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option		Summary
Gold		“Formalise VCSFE as core delivery partner” • Establish/refresh cross-place alliances with shared outcomes dashboards and quarterly expos for providers. • Ensure VCSFE offers are routinely included in NHS letters; maintain contact lists/supervision networks. • Embed VCSFE in Neighbourhood Health pilots • Expand co-located models (e.g., Wirral’s ‘Joy’) • Integrate social prescribing and navigator roles • Co-locate drop-ins in youth settings.
Silver		“Alliance standard” • Establish/refresh cross-place alliances with shared outcomes dashboards and quarterly expos for providers. • Ensure VCSE offers are routinely included in NHS letters; maintain contact lists/supervision networks.
Bronze		“Letters & listings” • Ensure VCSE offers are routinely included in NHS letters; maintain contact lists/supervision networks.

If we do nothing

Fragmentation persists; CYP move between disconnected services; duplication and inefficiency continue; step-up/step-down pathways remain fragile.



7. Fair Funding

Overview

Move from short-termism to stability by aligning with the National Youth Strategy's £500m investment, Better Youth Spaces, Young Futures commitments, and reversing youth sector decline.

Gold / Silver / Bronze - at a glance

Option		Summary
Gold		"Single pooled C&M CYP Fund" • Establish pooled local authority & ICB & VCSFE fund with a Fair Funding Protocol and participatory grant-making. • Participatory grant-making • Multi-year funding (3 years standard) with inflation uplifts • No more one-year contracts
Silver		"Protocol-first" • Agree shared funding principles across 9 places • Partial pooling of 2–3 aligned streams. • No more one-year contracts
Bronze		"Shared principles" • Coordinated funding intentions with a roadmap toward pooling.

If we do nothing

Short-termism will deepen, destabilising the youth sector further as organisations contract or collapse, innovation stalls, and CYP lose access to consistent, trusted support.



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

Providers

We're grateful to the young people, professionals, organisations and VCSFE partners who took part and helped shape this report. Your honesty, time and expertise made this possible. The providers we reviewed are listed below.

Warrington

Active Families (Fearnhead community centre)
Advanced Solutions
Bridgewater
Broomfield's Youth project
ChatHealth
Coffee Bar (Holy Trinity)
Creative Remedies
DSN (Deaf and Sensory Network) Youth Vibe
Empower
Get Warrington Talking (Gateway centre)
Happy OK Sad website
Impact -Warrington youth council
Kooth Warrington
Living Well Hub
Make Space Connect Hub (Commissioners have confirmed it will close in early 2026)
Making Space - Boost course
MHST
More than men (18+) (Whitecross community centre)
n-compass - Warrington Carers Hub
Offload - Men's Mental Fitness (Rugby League Cares)
Orford Youth Service / Orford Youth Base (part of WBC Youth Service)
PAUSE (Warrington Speak Up)
Peer Talk (Gateway)
St Josephs family centre
TAGS (Teenagers, Gender & Sexuality) — WBC Targeted Youth
Talk Hub CIC
Talking Point
Walton and Halton support hub
WANDS (Warrington Autism neurodiverse group)
Warrington children's specialist nursing team
Warrington Council Youth service
Warrington MH matters
Warrington YFC (Youth for Christ)
Warrington Youth Zone/Youth In Mind
Wellbeing Team (based from the towns community centres)
YMCA St Helens Listening Service (Warrington)
Youth Fed
Warrington Wolves - detached
Glys - Gay & Lesbian Youth Support Service

Cheshire East

Autism Inclusive (Crewe)
Cheshire Autism Practical Support (now APS)
ChatHealth (11–19 Text Service)
Cheshire East 0–19+ Service (Health Visiting, FNP School Nursing) and Contact Hub
Cheshire East Council & Youth Support Service (YSS)
Cheshire East Information, Advice & Support Service – CEIAS (SEND)
Cheshire Young Carers
Crewcial Café (Crisis Café, Crewe)
DSN Youth Vibe (Deaf & Sensory Network)
Family Hubs
Friends for Leisure
Great Minds Together – Autism Central Hub
Inspire Her (Her-Place Charitable Trust)
Involvement, Recovery & Wellness Centre (CWP)
Just Drop-In
Koala NW (Sleep Service)
Kooth (Digital Mental Health)
MHSTs – Mental Health Support Teams (Schools)
Pure Insight (Care Leavers)
Ruby's Fund (SEND Centre)
YMCA Cheshire
Your Mind Matters (Youth Fed)
Inspire (Youth Service)
Utopia (Youth Service)
Jigsaw SEND group
Reach Programmes (NEET, PEX, Prevent + Stanier pilot)
Youth Base in the North
Youth Fed
Detached Youth Work Offer
Create Arts (Cheshire)
South Cheshire CLASP
Space4Autism
SWaNS CIC
The Dome (Youth) – late this year
Visyon
Weston Hub Crisis Café (Macclesfield)
Wilderness Tribe CIC
Wilmslow Youth Café



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Providers

CWAC

14-17 autistic teen social group
Art and Soul Tribe CIC
B U - LGBTQ+
Back on Track (Youth Fed)
Blacon Youth Hub
Bugz and Bunnies CIC
Cafe 71 - Spider Project (Companeros)
Chapter Mental Health (West Cheshire)
Chat Health
Cheshire Fire Cadets
Cheshire Young Carers
Choices SEND Youth club
CWAC THOR
CWAC Youth Service
CWP (Cheshire Wirral Partnership)
Cyber Academy (Youth Fed)
Detached youth work
DSN (Deaf and Sensory Network) Youth Vibe
Ellesmere Port Youth Zone - Salvation army/council
Endorphins (Ellesmere Port, Winsford, Northwich, Chester, Neston)
Enigma Connect
Family Help and Support Service
Fearless Futures (Blades down)
Flynn's Port in the Storm crisis cafe Ellesmere Port
Groundwork Cheshire
HealthBox
Inspire Her
Kings Trust
Knockout violence (Blades down)
Lache Youth Cafe
Live Cheshire
Live Well CWAC
Malpas Youth Club
MHST's
Mid Cheshire Mind
Navigator service - EH (Northwich, Chester, Ellesmere Port, Winsford)
Neston Youth Centre
New Images - Winsford Youth and Community Forum
Northwich youth zone (council)
Platform for Life (certain areas of Chester)
Polaris Children's Services
Polaris CWAC THOR Team
Radiate Arts Chester
Recovery College - Involvement, Recovery and Wellness Centre
Samaritans Northwich
Space4Autism
Starting Well (from 8 children's centres)
Storyhouse
The Link Ellesmere Port (Blades down)
The Venue Community Centre - Northwich
Theatre Porto (all about YP) - Ellesmere Port
Tomorrows Women
Via - New beginnings
Wellbeing Coaching (delivered by chapter and mid Cheshire mind)

CWAC

Wildness Tribe CIC
Winsford Men's group
Youth ASB events (Yade)
Youth Fed
Youth Provision LGBTQ+ (the proud trust)- Phoenix
Youth Senate (Youth Council)
Youth service (CWAC)
Youth Zones
Create Arts

Knowsley

Advanced Solutions
Butterflies Project (part of listening ear)
Centre 63
CGL
Chat Health
Endorphins Knowsley
Evolving Mindset
Family Hubs
Halewood Junior parkrun
Kings Trust programme
Knowsley VCSFE MH Alliance
Knowsley Youth Chamber
Listening Ear (Merseyside)
Merseyside Youth Association
MHST
Mind Moves mentoring services
Moscroft Community Centre
One Knowsley
QWell Knowsley
Right to Succeed
Southdene Community Centre
Vibe
Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust
Young Carers
Young Minds
Youth Cabinet
YPAS
ZunTold
Career connect (also in LCR)
Bully busters
Cells project (Choices, Education, Learning, Lifelong Skills)
Vees Place (part of a church)
Daisy Inclusive
Collective Encounters
The Hub (Explore Partnership) & Kidz zone and youth zone



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

Providers

St Helens

0-19 Healthy Child Programme
Advanced Solutions
Barnardo's Boss
Barnardo's Resilience
Bold Bhaile C. I. C.
Chat Health
Chrysalis centre for change
Community Eating Disorder
Creative Alternatives
Crisis cafe
Digital Arts Box CIC
Family Hubs
Grow Your Happy
Hope House
Kooth (online)
Listening Ear
Maximum Edge
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
MHST (school)
Newton Community Centre
Over the Rainbow
Paths Programme
Positive Life Workshops CIC
Powered by Hip Hop CIC
QWell
Reach Rainhill C.I.C.
Right to Succeed (Parr)
Sherdley Primary
Shout (text service)
Social Prescribing
St Helens Council Early Years Team
St Helens Library Service
St Helens Wellbeing Service
TAZ (sexual health)
The Talk Squad (Harrys with Shout)
Thrive St Helens website
Transforming Care Programme
Vibe
Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust
YMCA St Helens
Young Carers
YP DAAT (drug)
Spectrum Gaming
Career connect (also in LCR)
Daisy Inclusive
Collective Encounters
Perth Community Centre (Thatto Heath)
Rockets Community Club

Halton

Activ Engagement & Education CIC
Active Halton
Advanced Solutions
Autism Practical Support (APS)
BCHFT (Children in care health service -Bridgewater)
Career connect (also in LCR)
CBUK (child bereavement)
Chat Health Halton
Drugs and alcohol youth support team
Family Hubs
Fit 4 Life
Got Your Back (Cheshire)
Halton D of E Open Award
Halton SENDIAS/Halton SEND Partnership
Halton Young Carers Centre
Halton Youth Cabinet (run by Vibe)
Hazlehurst Studios Youth Zine project
Headz Up Halton drop-in hubs
HIT team (Health Improvement Team)
Kooth
Mako Create (Halton and Widnes)
MHST
Positive Future Consultancy Ltd
Power in partnership (PIP) - Youthy (Hub in 2026 but deliver sessions out of community centres)
Runcorn Mental health matters
SEND R US
Shout
Sports Alive
The Children's Society (Resolve)
Transcend
Venus
Vibe
Walton and Halton support hub
We Are With You (Young People Halton)
Well Runcorn (reconnecting Runcorn) - early 2026 opening. Health and education Hub
Wellbeing Enterprises (Runcorn)
Widnes crisis cafe - MH matters
Youth Fed
Glow



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Providers

Wirral

A&K Community Hub
 Andys Man club
 Bazaar (Bloom Building)
 Billy Found Mates (salvation army)
 Branch website and referral/matching service
 Break the Mould Wirral
 BU Wirral
 Carrbridge Centre Youth Club
 Charlotte's Brightside
 Chat Health
 Comics Youth
 Companeros crisis cafe (spider project)
 Creative Youth Development (Pilgrim street)
 Detached Youth Team
 Directions for Men
 Diversity Hub 67
 Dove
 Eastham Youth Space
 Energise Cycles
 Equilibrium North West CIC
 Family Hubs
 Future Yard
 Grow Wellbeing
 Harmony Hub (WEB)
 Hatch (delivered by Utopia)
 Health Services in Schools Youth Workers
 Hectic Happiness
 Heygarth Primary School
 Hype (Central Park Hub)
 I am PHAB Wirral (St Anne's Parish Centre)
 Kooth
 Let's Talk
 Liscard Youth Space (in fire station)
 MHST's
 Moreton Youth Space (in library)
 MYA
 New ferry Youth Space
 New Horizons LGBTQ+
 Next Chapter
 Open Door Charity
 Pilgrim Centre Drama sessions
 Positivity Club CIC
 Quirky Community Hub
 QWell (18+)
 Resilient North West
 Response Counselling (Pilgrim Street)
 Shaftesbury Youth Club
 Shine Together Community Hub
 Spider Project (recovery through arts)
 Taking Strides
 The Drop In (Pilgrim Street Arts Centre)
 The Hive Youth Zone
 Tiny Tools for big Feelings (based from hired venues across Wirral)
 Tomorrows Women
 Trauma recovery community hub (through WEB)

Wirral

Weapons Down Wirral
 West Kirby Youth Space
 Wirral Change
 Wirral Forest Wellbeing walks
 Wirral Health Project CIC
 Wirral Mind
 Wirral Youth Voice
 Youth at Beechwood (The little centre)
 Youth Fed Wirral
 Zillo
 Zillo Young Reporters
 Career connect (also in LCR)
 Daisy Inclusive
 Collective Encounters
 Belvedere Centre (for disabled children, yp and their friends)
 Wirral Chinese Cultural Association

Knowsley

Advanced Solutions
 Butterflies Project (part of listening ear)
 Centre 63
 CGL
 Chat Health
 Endorphins Knowsley
 Evolving Mindset
 Family Hubs
 Halewood Junior parkrun
 Kings Trust programme
 Knowsley VCSFE MH Alliance
 Knowsley Youth Chamber
 Listening Ear (Merseyside)
 Merseyside Youth Association
 MHST
 Mind Moves mentoring services
 Moscroft Community Centre
 One Knowsley
 QWell Knowsley
 Right to Succeed
 Southdene Community Centre
 Vibe
 Wirral Community Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust
 Young Carers
 Young Minds
 Youth Cabinet
 YPAS
 ZunTold
 Career connect (also in LCR)
 Bully busters
 Cells project (Choices, Education, Learning, Lifelong Skills)
 Vees Place (part of a church)
 Daisy Inclusive
 Collective Encounters
 The Hub (Explore Partnership) & Kidz zone and youth zone



Change and Integration Programme
 Together for Young Lives,
 Cheshire and Merseyside

Providers

Liverpool

Activ 8
ADDvanced Solutions Community Network
Alfie's squad
Al-Ghazali Centre
Amparo Cheshire & Merseyside
Anfield Community Arts
Anfield Sports Community Centre
Bobby Colleran
Breckfield & North Everton Neighbourhood Council Ltd
Catch22 Charity Limited
City of Liverpool Sea cadets
Comic Youth
Community Youth Services
Compass
Croxteth Gems
Deaf Active
Dynamic Support
Edge Hill Youth & Community Centre (EHYCC)
Everton in the Community – The Blue Base (L4)
Everton In The Community (The Peoples Hub)
EYPP (Ellergreen Young Persons Project)
FireFit Hub
Garston Adventure Playground
GFS (Girls Friendly Society)
Girls with Dreams
Granby Toxteth Development Trust (GTDT)
Greenbank Sports Academy and Greenbank College
Gyro/Action Youth (trans health)
Harthill Youth Club
ILC / Pars Community
Kinship care Liverpool
LFC Foundation (Citywide)
Life Rooms community offer
Liverpool City Council -Youth Service
Liverpool Light Crisis Cafe
Liverpool Lighthouse
Liverpool Queer Minds
Mary Seacole House
Marybone Youth Centre
Merseyside Play Action Council
Merseyside Somali And Community Association (MSCA)
Merseyside Youth Association
Methodist Centre Youth Centre
Netherley youth and community initiative (NYCI)
Neurodiverse Family Support
New Horizons
Norris Green Community Alliance
Norris Green Youth Centre
OakLeaf
Positive Futures Liverpool
Positive Pathways
Priority Youth Project
PSS
Rainbow Trust Children's Charity
Rhys Jones Community Centre

Liverpool

Rice Lane City Farm
Speke Venny, Speke Adventure Playground
Sports Alive
St Cyril's Children and Young People - SCCYP
The Bronte Centre
The Central Youth Club
The Gordon (Kirkdale Neighbourhood Council)
The Greenhouse Project
The Shewsy Youth Club
The Unity Youth Club
The Valley Community Theatre
Tiber Project
Togetherall (Liverpool Hope University)
Toxteth Town Hall Community Resource Centre (L8)
Triple C
Walton Youth & Community Project
Woodlands Community Centre
Young Person Advisory Service (YPAS)
The Nest (Seans Place) for males
Spectrum Gaming
Career connect (also in LCR)
Create Arts
Barnardo's Action with Young carers
Bully busters
Daisy Inclusive
Collective Encounters
Liverpool 6 (L6) Community Association
4Wings
Vauxhall Millenium Resource Centre
Kitty's Laundrette (also talk and learn space and events)
Growing Sudley



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

YMCA ST HELENS
YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Providers

Sefton

0-19 Healthy Child Programme
ACES PCN (Primary Care Network)
Active Lifestyles - 121 programme
Advanced Solutions
Alder Hey Foundation Trust - SEFTON PLACE
AWARD SOLUTIONS
Brunswick Youth and Community Centre
Chat health
Education and MH network
Family Hubs
Family Wellbeing Centres
Kindfulness Coffee Club
Kooth online
Liverpool Light Crisis Cafe
Melling Youth Club
MHST
MYA Space
Parenting 2000
PSS
School nurse service
Sefton Carers Centre
Sefton Emotional Achievement Service (group of charities)
Southport Sefton CVS crisis cafe
SWACA
Swan women's centre
Thornton Wellbeing Centre
Venus Charity
Ykids
Buddy Up (SEND)
Comics Youth - Turn the Page
The Nest (Seans Place) for males
Southport crisis cafe
Crosby crisis cafe
Life Rooms
Life is for living
Everton in the community
Daisy Inclusive
Bebe's Hive
Rise Up
Windmills
Career connect (also in LCR)
Create Arts
Bully busters
The Inclusive Hub CIC
Phoenix Community and Youth project
Collective Encounters
Netherton Feel Good Factory



Change and Integration Programme
Together for Young Lives,
Cheshire and Merseyside

Appendix

Methodology

CYP feedback was gathered primarily through an online survey disseminated via service providers, schools, virtual schools, and participation networks. To ensure inclusivity, we took additional steps to reach CYP who may not currently access services and who prefer to share their views in person rather than through an online survey. This included engagement with deaf and blind societies, outreach to marginalised groups, attendance at youth cabinet meetings, and facilitation of dedicated listening sessions. CYP's views were also gathered at community events such as careers fairs.

Demographics

In total, approximately 1,100 children and young people from across the region contributed their views. Demographics can be found opposite (please note this data reflects 898 survey respondents only. In-person sessions did not collect demographics but involved a diverse mix of genders and ethnic backgrounds (ages 13+), across Cheshire East, Halton, Wirral, Knowsley and Cheshire West & Chester, as well as including specific sessions with SEND pupils).

Although engagement numbers were lower in some areas, existing needs assessment findings were also drawn upon as well as VCSFE partners used existing trusted relationships, outreach work and community-based engagement methods to reach young people who are often under-represented in consultation. This provides confidence that the findings reflect lived experience rather than response volume.

